

# The Significance of 108 – Why Is It So Important?

In this excerpt from the Mahabharat program that Sadhguru conducted in 2012, Sadhguru looks at the nature of time and explains how the sages of Bharat had a phenomenal understanding of this most fundamental aspect of creation.

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*In this excerpt from the [Mahabharat program](#) that Sadhguru conducted in 2012, Sadhguru looks at the nature of time and explains how the sages of Bharat had a phenomenal understanding of this most fundamental aspect of creation. He looks at the significance of 108, and why it turns up in many places such as the number of beads in rudraksha malas. He looks at how 108 is important not just for the human being but also on the scale of the Earth and Solar System.*

[ఆధ్యాత్మికతలో 108 అనే సంఖ్య ప్రాధాన్యత ఏమిటి?](#)

**Sadhguru:** From the infiniteness of pre-creation arose three possibilities of creation. Through the limitless space, it chose to find expression in the form of time, energy, and gravity. These three fundamentals trapped this timeless, limitless space into a time-bound, limited creation. Of these three, time – the relentless time – elates and bludgeons, nurtures and gnashes, rises and falls. Time gives respite to no one. A worm or a bird, the hunted or the hunter, the ruled or the ruler, the slave or the emperor, beautiful bodies and wondrous palaces, prime of fame and angst of shame – everything goes back to nothingness, to dust and ashes.

## Time is always on

*Kala*, time, is one factor that is relentlessly on. Either you ride this time and live a beautiful life, or you get bludgeoned by this relentless wheel of time. Either one is destroyed by the process of time, or one is delivered by the process of time. Either one is entrapped by the process of time, or one uses time to transcend and liberate oneself. Time is the most significant dimension of creation – not just a human concept, as most people believe. If there was no time, there would be no beginning and no end. If there was no beginning and no end, there would be no creation.

It is in time that we exist. It is in time that we were born. It is in time that we will die. If one understands the significance of time, the laws of time, the dharma of time and is in tune with the dharma of time, one is not just a *jaya* – one is a *vijaya*. One makes it here and one makes it elsewhere. Conversely, one who is not in tune with the dharma of time will get crushed and crumbled by the process of life. Life is just a play of time. Understanding this, the ancient sages, seers, and yogis of this region looked at time with enormous attention. Our idea of time is essentially based on the way we are connected with the immediate creation around us – the planet and the solar system.

## The significance of 108

According to the *Surya Siddhanta*, an ancient Indian astronomical work, the sunlight moves at a speed of 2,202 *yojanas* in 0.5 *nimisha*. One *yojana* is nine miles. 2,202 *yojanas* amount to 19,818 miles. One *nimisha* is equal to  $\frac{16}{75}$  of a second. Half a *nimisha* amounts to  $\frac{8}{75}$  of a second, which is 0.106666 seconds. A speed of 19,818 miles in 0.106666 seconds equals 185,793 miles per second. This is approximately in line with the modern calculations, according to which the speed of light is 186,282 miles per second. Modern science has arrived at this number with great difficulty and all kinds of instruments, while a few thousand years ago, they got this number by simple observation of how the human system and the solar system function together.

The distances between the Sun and the Earth, the distances between the Moon and the Earth, the way the planet rotates and the impact it has – all these things have been looked at with great care. The diameter of the Sun multiplied by 108 equals the distance between Sun and Earth, and the diameter of the Moon multiplied by 108 equals the distance between Earth and Moon. The diameter of the Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Earth. That is why we have 108 beads in a mala.

I could go on with all kinds of fabulous figures, but the most important thing is the deep connection between the making of time and the making of the human body. You know, the planet is approximately round and it has a slightly tilted orbit. As it travels, as it spins, it forms a circle. Today we know it takes 25,920 years to complete this cycle. This tilt mainly happens because of the gravitational pull of the moon over the earth. And that many years are called one cycle of *yugas*<sup>[1]</sup>. Each of these cycles has eight *yugas*.

## Earth and man

Back to one cycle of axial procession – 25,920 divided by 60 (which is also the number of heart beats per minute if you are healthy) – comes to 432. Four hundred thirty two is a number that comes up in various cultures – the Norse culture, the ancient Jewish culture, the Egyptian culture, the Mesopotamian culture, and very much in the Indian culture here. Why 432? If you are in good health and in good condition, your heart beats about 60 times per minute, which is 3600 per hour, and  $3600 \times 24$  equals 86,400 heartbeats per day. If you divide 864 by 2, again you have 432.

Only if you are riding the time, you will live an extraordinary life, which is what a human being and the human brain are designed for.

If you are healthy, you take about 15 breaths per minute. If you have done lots of *sadhana*, it could be only 12. 15 breaths per minute means 900 breaths per hour and 21,600 per day. 216 multiplied by 2

becomes 432 again. If you take the circumference of the earth – there is something called a nautical mile which is the real mile in the sense that it has something to do with the way the planet is. The other units of measurement were created for ease of calculation.

You know there are 360° in a circle. Likewise, there are 360° upon the planet, and each degree is divided into 60 minutes. One of these minutes accounts for one nautical mile. That means the circumference of the earth at the equator is 21,600 nautical miles – that is also how many breaths you take per day. That means the planet is spinning on time and you are doing well. If the planet was not spinning on time, it would be no good at all for us. If you are not in tune with it, it is also no good for you.

This is to show you time is not a concept that we invented – time is deep-rooted in the system, in the very way we are made. When we go into Mahabharat, there is so much talk about the yugas and how they function. I want you to look at the impact of time in human life from a different context. This is not something that someone thought up – this is a phenomenal and profound science. Yoga has always been deeply involved with this. It is just that we don't believe in propounding theories about it. By practice, we try to attune the body to the times and spaces of creation, because without being in tune with them, you do not get very far. If you are not riding the time, you will live a mediocre life – probably a suffering life. Only if you are riding the time, you will live an extraordinary life, which is what a human being and the human brain are designed for.

***The numbers in brief:***

*There are 2202 yojanas in 0.5 nimisha.*

*1 yojana = 9 miles*

*1 nimisha = seconds*

*2202 yojana in 0.5 nimisha = 2202 x 9 miles in 0.5 x (16/75) seconds*

*= 19,818 miles in 0.10666 seconds*

*= 185,793 miles/second*

[1] There are 4 yugas: Kali, Dwapara, Treta and Krita yuga. Each of these occurs twice per 25920-year cycle.

*Yugas, the significance of 108, and many more mystical aspects are the subject of the DVD “Yugas – The Tides of Time”. Purchase and download the video at Isha Downloads.*

***Editor's Note:*** This article is based on an excerpt from the [December 2014 issue of Forest Flower](#). Pay what you want and download. (set '0' for free). [Print subscriptions](#) are also available.